

03-1786

4 March 1963

**MEMORANDUM FOR: The Executive Committee**

**SUBJECT : Watch Office Procedures and the Prompt Reporting of Information to Higher Authority**

NSC REVIEW  
COMPLETED,  
06/26/2003

OSD REVIEW COMPLETED  
9/16/2002

1. The recent episode involving the Venezuelan ship Anzoategui revealed certain weaknesses in Washington in Watch Office procedures and in prompt reporting of information to higher authority. While the CIA was not directly involved in this particular episode, the actions taken are of direct interest.

2. Attached for your information and guidance is a memorandum for the President dated 20 February and one from the President to the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense and DCL, as well as a letter from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, commenting on their procedures. Will all members of the Executive Committee please insure that the appropriate personnel are advised of this material and that all of our procedures are correct and expeditious.

(signed) Lyman B. Kirkpatrick

**Lyman B. Kirkpatrick**  
**Executive Director**

OSD REVIEW COMPLETED

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

February 20, 1963

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## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Analysis of Reports on the Venezuelan Ship Incident

The Department of State and the Department of Defense furnished a chronology of events in the handling of the Venezuelan ship incident on 14 February. Based on these statements, the following seem to be a fair appraisal of what occurred. Certain steps that could be taken to improve our handling of any similar incidents in the future are suggested by these reports.

(1) The watch officers during the night took what would normally be considered appropriate action. In the State Department, the Operations Center telephoned the Venezuelan desk officer, Mr. Moskowitz, and communicated with Navy Flag Plot, who had already been interested because of the press reports. The Operations Center also checked with the CIA duty officer.

In this instance, there appears to be a lack of appreciation of the political implications involved; it probably would have been appropriate to move this further up the line in the State Department. Additionally, the Navy duty officer should not have been influenced so heavily by the State Department suggestion of "wait until the Venezuelians ask us for something."

(2) About 5:45 a.m., the Navy Flag Plot reported to the State Department Operations Center that the Navy had a DF fix on the missing vessel.

(3) At 6:15 a.m. the CNO duty captain informed Admiral Ricketts of the fix on the missing ship, who directed that it be passed by telephone to the Naval Attache in Caracas.

(4) At 8:00 a.m. the Secretary of the Navy, Under Secretary Fay and Admiral Ricketts were briefed on the matter. At about 9:30 a.m., Vice Admiral Griffin telephoned Admiral Demas and discussed the matter of

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locating the ship; and at about 10 o'clock the CNO duty captain was advised that a request from the State Department (indicating that the Venezuelan Government was going to request assistance in locating the ship) would be forthcoming.

(5) The first decision in the State Department was made at 9:15 a.m., when Assistant Secretary Martin decided to institute some action, seeking a request from the Venezuelan Government for the U. S. Navy to search for the Venezuelan ship. The State Department made no formal request for the Navy to take action until 10:35 a.m., when Mr. Allen of the State Department called General Enemark in the Department of Defense. From that point on, as the Venezuelans made a formal request to the State Department (around 11:30 a.m.), the responses were orderly and timely in the Department of Defense. It seems, however, that the senior officer in the State Department was not in touch with the senior officer in the Defense Department until after the President called Acting Secretary Ball, which was 12:55 p.m.

(6) Checking by telephone with the Director of the Joint Staff, we find that General Enemark from DOD/ISA was in touch with the Joint Staff about 10:00 a.m., asking what they were doing about the problem of the ship. It was much later in the morning when General Enemark finally called and said that the State Department had requested that we search and find and gain control of the ship. The Director of the Joint Staff referred the action to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Next they called Mr. Nitze, who took it up with Secretary McNamara. The time of this is not clear, but finally at 1:43 p.m. the message went out, which was later amended by various actions.

(7) The Navy's own action resulted in patrol planes being launched about 12 noon to begin a search.

(8) From 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon on, the action was really the changing of orders to commanders, whether to board or not to board, whether to use force or not to use force, etc.

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON

27 FEB 1963

Dear John:

Reference is made to the President's memorandum of 20 February 1963 on the Anzotegui Affair wherein he expressed areas of concern in the handling of such cases.

Within the Department of Defense, the National Military Command Center (NMCC) is the center of military operations. All information which could result in the use of military force should be referred to that center which has procedures for informing the top level DoD decision making officials and for notifying the White House Situation Center.

Although your agency may not have been directly involved in this particular affair, it has indicated that our procedures are not airtight. However, I am informed that your Operations Center has reached an agreement with the NMCC personnel on the procedures to be followed in passing information of interest to our agencies and the White House which might require military action. I believe that if our centers follow these procedures, we can prevent a recurrence of instances such as the one cited by the President and increase the efficiency of our operations.

Sincerely,

CS

Mr. John A. McCone  
Director, Central Intelligence Agency

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

2 MAR 1973

Dear John:

I am attaching hereto a copy of the memorandum which I forwarded to the President concerning the Anzoategui Affair. You may find it helpful in knowing what measures we are taking.

Alexis Johnson and I have agreed to have members of our staff get together and work out detailed procedures to effect better and closer coordination of emergency actions requiring quick reaction. You may be interested in designating a member of your staff to sit in with them and see if there are any measures to be taken to improve the coordination of State and Defense Departments with CIA. If so, I will have my staff get in touch with whomever you would like to designate and inform him of the meetings they plan to hold.

Sincerely,

*lo*

1 Inclosure a/s

Honorable John A. McCone, Director  
CIA Headquarters  
Washington 25, D. C.

SecDef Control No. X/583

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
Washington 25, D. C.

February 27, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Anzoategui Affair

The analysis and conclusions contained in your memorandum of February 20, 1963, on the above subject, have been carefully considered by Mr. McNamara and me, and in consequence the following actions have been taken to ensure adequate alerting and timely action should similar incidents occur in the future:

1. The Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency have been requested to inform the National Military Command Center (NMCC) of the Joint Staff of all information or requests which could result in the use of military forces. (The NMCC is the Department of Defense center for military operations.)
2. The Military Departments have been provided copies of your memorandum of February 20, 1963, and directed to review, and revise where needed, the operating procedures for the Operation Centers. These revised procedures will include instructions to watch officers that all information received which could result in the use of military forces will be passed to the NMCC regardless of source or political implications.
3. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been directed to review the operating procedures of the NMCC and operating instructions of the NMCC duty officers to assure that they are adequate for the timely notification of top level Department of Defense decision-making officials of information and situations which could result in the use of military forces.
4. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has also been informed that Mr. McNamara and I are to be notified immediately of any situation which in his opinion is of interest to the White House and the Department of Defense and which could require decisions in regard to the use of military force. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs is also to be notified if any situation has politico-military implications.

It would be most helpful to us if the White House Situation Room would see to it that the NMCC (as the central and primary point of contact on all matters of interest to the White House and the Department of Defense which might involve the use of military forces) receives all necessary information and requests.

Signed

ROSWELL L. GILPATRIC  
Deputy Secretary of Defense

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att: 1668, 11, 12  
1783, 11

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

# EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE MEMORANDUM No. 94

DATE 4 March 1963

## MEMORANDUM FOR:

DEPUTY DIRECTOR (PLANS)  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (INTELLIGENCE)  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (RESEARCH)  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (SUPPORT)  
COMPTROLLER  
INSPECTOR GENERAL  
GENERAL COUNSEL  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
FOR NATIONAL ESTIMATES

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LBK:drm

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